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INQUIRY

Topic: SHIP HIJACKING

The hijacking of the cruise ship Achille Lauro ended Wednesday when Palestinian terrorists released 511 hostages and surrendered to Egyptian authorities. USA TODAY's Barbara Reynolds and Carol Richards asked five observers for their comments on this latest incident.

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The act of piracy has been a crime for centuries. These men are criminals. The Egyptians should sock these guys in jail and not give them safe passage to Syria or wherever it is they want to go. If the Egyptians felt they rescued the ship by promising the terrorists something, they should renege on the promise. I'd try to monitor where the hijackers went and seek to have them extradited to Italy for trial.

I think the Italians should ask for it, and if they don't, and an American was killed in the hijacking, then I think the Americans should be very active in promoting this judicial remedy.

Those of us who have observed for some years the buildup of terrorist capability believe it isn't going to stop until we find countermeasures and bring the terrorist activists to justice.

That's why I argue for risking some lives, if necessary and useful, to demonstrate that terrorists will not gain any of their objectives and will be killed in the process. If this hijacking had continued for another day or two, I believe we should have assaulted them.

I think the principle — which Secretary Shultz enunciated months ago —

that there may be occasions where, to stop the crime of terrorism, you may have to risk lives of some victims or indeed of some commando assault force or rescue force, you may have to do so, just as you risk the lives of policemen to stop domestic crime.

As long as terrorism gets a free ride, as long as it gets the international publicity, and as long as the political objectives are gained, which they tend to be, these people will continue.

I hope this event breaks the chain, because this was a botched play. These terrorists seemed to me to be a little amateurish, because they had kind of a white elephant on their hands in controlling this huge ship, and only a bunch of crew on board, who were not such good victims and probably were pretty tough characters.

The whole game these days is publicity, and if they'd been really smart, they would have demanded a portable pack satellite TV link and a television pool crew. Then they'd have had a way to manipulate people. As it was, they were just sailing around the ocean out there.

The point is that there are certain nations that think they benefit from terrorism. That campaign must be shown to be unsuccessful. This is the first time, in a major incident, that terrorism really hasn't paid off.



Ray Cline